

Breakin' it down

I was concerned about the racial breakdown section on Page 36 of the Book [January 2005]. There is no mention of Latin American and or Hispanic personnel in our great Air Force. I'm of Hispanic decent, and know personally many others in the Air Force have the same background. It makes me unhappy to see that we're not even counted in the racial breakdown.

Staff Sgt. Jose L. Luviano
Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq

As you noticed, the chart in the "Personnel Facts" is a racial — not an ethnic — breakdown. In previous years, Airman magazine used a graph labeled "Ethnic Breakdown" with a pie chart showing Caucasian, Black, Hispanic and Other.

You may not know that the Air Force changed its race codes. One of the main changes is that "Hispanic" is not a race but an ethnic designator, e.g., you can be "White" or "Black" and still be Hispanic. The way we presented the data is the way the military equal opportunity assessment is delivered to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (with race being defined as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander or White).

Kudos

I just wanted to pass along my compliments for the great photo of Tech. Sgt. Mark Kinkade and Master Sgt. Lance Cheung in the Notebook [December 2004]. The magazine is looking as great as ever. As one of the instructors for Air

Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of New Mexico, we regularly place our copies in our ROTC cadet library, and they get devoured by these young, eager soon-to-be lieutenants. Great writing, great photography, great layout and design, and great subject matter — keep up the awesome work!

Maj. Michael Richmond
University of New Mexico,
AFROTC Det 510

Weapons security

In the article "The Store That Goes To War" [February 2005], the lead photo showing Soldiers standing in line with empty weapons isn't in the best interest of their security. The photo clearly shows there are no magazines in the weapons. In a foreign land, carrying an

empty weapon is begging for someone to take the weapon away. If the Soldiers are mature and professional enough to serve, they are mature enough to serve with loaded weapons. At least have a loaded magazine in the weapon. To have them carry empty weapons is jeopardizing their safety and increasing the risk of having the weapon fall into the wrong hands. To publicize it in photos only advertises the fact that much more.

Russ Bryan
via e-mail

Keeping the faith

I would like to thank you for your outstanding publication, which keeps me, and quite frankly several of my fellow Air Force brothers informed about what's going on with our service today. Your magazine is incredibly important to me, and it's truly one of the things that I look forward to each month.

I have multiple system's atrophy, one of the illnesses which directly attacks the myelin sheath of the brain and central nervous system. There is no cure or means of slowing the progression. I'm not yet totally paralyzed, but I'm confined to a wheelchair permanently and, for the most part, bed bound. I have my family read the articles to me or my Veterans Affairs nurses, who work in my home. They're still saying that the disease is terminal, but I still believe that if I can keep fighting, I think I can beat it. My faith has kept me. It's your magazine that lifts not only the spirits of those in uniform, but the spirits of those who will be joining our ranks and those who have gone before you. The Air Force truly is a wondrous service, one to be proud of and a time of your life to cherish.

James Dick
Overland Park, Kansas

Complete package

I just finished reading the February issue cover to cover. This was simply a fabulous issue! I loved everything — story selections, layout, design, photos and writing styles. I can't say enough about the quality of photos and their presentation. Cheers to the editors and staff for a fine effort. It was truly a delight to read this issue.

Earl Shellner
via e-mail

Meet the Staff

Louis A. Arana-Barradas — an Air Force brat from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico — is a Gulf War veteran who spent 26 years in the Air Force. He's served in Arizona, Florida, Germany, Utah, Spain, the Pentagon and Texas. And he did a two-year tour with the Pacific Stars and Stripes newspaper in South Korea. He has reported from Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. A senior writer and assistant editor, he writes features on the Air Force and its people. If you have a story idea, give him a call at (210) 925-7757 or DSN 945-7757, or e-mail him at louis.arana-barradas@afnews.af.mil.

by Master Sgt. Efrain Gonzalez



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■ **Air Force Print News:** www.af.mil/news — The Air Force news wire service providing Air Force and Department of Defense news and information, with daily updates from around the world.

■ **Airman:** www.af.mil/news/airman — Feature and information magazine. Unit subscriptions: afnspub@afnews.af.mil.



Fond of Fairford

I really enjoyed "The Fairford Few" [February 2005], what I consider the best kept secret in Air Force assignments. I was the seventh person to arrive at RAF Fairford in February 1979 and was assigned to establish the safety office. I also became the BX Manager, Class Six store manager, publications distribution office and disaster preparedness. My wife was the second civilian hired on the base, and it was not uncommon to have families working together. There was limited military housing on the base as 50 percent of the houses were

designated crew quarters. Most Airmen who wanted military housing lived 10 miles northeast of the base. We were a close group, that first batch of settlers, and your article seems to bear out that continuance.

I retired in the fall of 1982, and I can honestly say that those three and a half years at "Fairford on the Farm" were probably the most enjoyable of the 20 spent with the Air Force. It was great to read that the base has survived the reductions and thanks for the article.

Allen R. Watters
via e-mail

